

Governor's Upper Yellowstone River Task Force
Meeting Summary
April 26, 2001
Yellowstone Inn
Meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members Present:

John Bailey, Chair	Brant Oswald
Dave Haug	Rod Siring
Tom Lane	Bob Wiltshire
Jerry O'Hair	

Others Present:

Allan Steinle, Ex-Officio	Pete Story
Joel Tohtz, Ex-Officio	Noah Greenwald
Tom Olliff, Ex-Officio	Karl Biastoch
Stan Sternberg, Ex-Officio	Abigail Dillen
Laurence Siroky, Ex-Officio	Duncan Patten
Dean Yashan, Ex-Officio	Lionel Dicharry
Liz Galli-Noble, Coordinator	Bill Moser
Amy Miller, Administrative Secretary	

II. Prior Meeting Minutes

The February 27, 2001 minutes were approved as written. Bob Wiltshire abstained.

III. Financial Updates

1. Grant Spending Report:

Amy Miller reported the following to the Task Force:

<i>EXPENDED GRANTS</i>			
Grant Name	Completed	Amount	Study Component
DNRC Watershed Planning Assistance Grant	6-30-99	2,100.00	Physical Features Inventory
DNRC HB223 Grant	7-30-99	10,000.00	Aerial Photography
DNRC Riparian/Wetlands Educational Grant	6-30-00	960.99	Hydrologic Response to the 1988 Fires
DEQ Grant (319 1 st)	9-30-00	40,000.00	Coordinator Position
DNRC Watershed Planning Assistance Grant	1-31-01	10,000.00	Watershed Land Use Study
<i>CURRENT GRANTS</i>			
Grant Name	Amount	Spent	Remaining Balance
DEQ Start-Up Grant	49,138.00	27,712.00	21,426.00
DNRC RDGP Grant	299,940.00	186,196.09	113,743.91
DEQ 319 Grant (2 nd)	58,000.00	15,884.09	42,115.91
DNRC HB223 (Riparian Trend Analysis Study)	6,500.00	1,684.96	4,815.04

Amy explained that the RDGP "spent" amount decreased for this report due to an overcharge submitted by the USGS in January 2001.

2. Funding Updates

Liz Galli-Noble reported that the Park Conservation District and BLM are currently signing a contract for the \$10,000 designated for the Wildlife Study. In addition, \$100,000 has been secured through the US Army Corps of Engineers, that contract should be signed in the next month or two.

IV. US Geological Survey Hydraulic Analysis—Additional Cross-Sectional Surveys

Liz Galli-Noble reported that the USGS recommends that twenty additional cross-sectional surveys be done for the Hydraulic Analysis. At this time, the USGS has completed 125 cross sections. The additional cross sections would be located in braided river reaches and in areas where data overlap gaps have been identified. Duncan Patten, Technical Advisory Committee Chairman, reported that the TAC is supportive of the additional cross sections, and emphasized how these actions help strengthen the integration of the studies.

The USGS will provide a 50 percent match for the additional cross-sectional surveys, if the funds provided are non-federal. The total cost of the additional cross sections is \$13,000.00, or \$6,500 in non-federal funding and \$6,500 in USGS match. The only non-federal funding available at this time would be through the Start-Up Grant.

Dean Yashan, Department of Environmental Quality, mentioned that spending the Start-Up Grant funds is a good idea, because the DEQ may need to close out that grant very soon. The Start-Up Grant is from fiscal year 1996.

Bob Wiltshire made a motion to approve the additional cross sections for \$6,500.00 from the Start-Up Grant. The motion was seconded by Brant Oswald. The motion passed unanimously, with Tom Lane abstaining from voting.

Wildlife Literature Review

As an aside, Tom Lane expressed his concern with the recently released publication *Toward Assessing the Effects of Bank Stabilization Activities on Wildlife Communities of the Upper Yellowstone River, U.S.A.* The document is a wildlife literature review funded by the US Fish Wildlife Service and conducted by the USGS—Biological Resource Division. In an attempt to clarify the purpose of this research document, Duncan Patten made the point that this document is a literature review, which is a collection of published, available information **only**. The fact that it seemed incomplete to Tom Lane, only emphasizes the need for the Task Force Wildlife Assessment.

In addition, Tom Lane had gathered bird count information, and offered the information to the Wildlife Study researchers.

V. Socio-Economic Assessment Contractor Update

Liz reported that the contractor for Phase I of the Socio-Economic Assessment (BBC) has been secured and that funding will be through Corps contracting. The Corps will take the lead in Phase II of the assessment, and is currently working on finalizing a contract for that phase. The Task Force has been asked to provide input throughout both phases. The Corps Fort Worth District has agreed to allow the Omaha District to use a pre-existing contract with BBC for the assessment.

VI. Task Force Role with YRCDC (Ex-Officio/RAC)?

On March 5, 2001, the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council (YRCDC) wrote John Bailey a letter inviting the Task Force to serve on their new Resource Advisory Committee (RAC). Originally, John had planned to present this option to the full Task Force and discuss the matter. However, in the mean time, the YRCDC has chosen to reassess the role and set-up of the RAC, making the discussion premature.

John Bailey is not sure how the Task Force should function with the YRCDC because the Task Force does not have authority down river. The Task Force wants to be sensitive not to over power the YRCDC, nor to be over powered by the YRCDC. Several project partners (Corps, EPA, etc.) have suggested, and John Bailey agrees, that the Task Force could serve as an ex-officio member on the RAC, versus a voting member, because our Governor-appointed Task Force status could lend support to a full river study.

John Bailey would represent the Task Force for policy issues; however, he would not have the time to attend a monthly YRCDC RAC meeting in Billings. Liz Galli-Noble could attend meetings to share information about the Task Force.

Given that the YRCDC will be making decisions concerning the RAC in the next month or so, Liz suggested that Daryl Stutterheim (Park Conservation District supervisor and member of the YRCDC) could give a presentation on the subject at the June Task Force meeting. The Task Force agreed that this would be a good way to proceed.

Bob Wiltshire suggested writing a “non-committal letter” to the YRCDC stating that we hope to work together in the future. Dave Haug suggested not making any decision until the Task Force hears from the YRCDC again.

VII. Outreach and Education Activities Updates

Workshops:

(1) March 3, 2001 Workshop Update

Liz Galli-Noble reported at more than 50 people attended the Task Force landowner workshop, which was held on March 3, 2001 at the Yellowstone Inn. The workshop went well, and comments from individuals who attended the workshop were overwhelmingly positive (see evaluation summary). Special thanks were given to Montana Watercourse for helping to fund the event, workshop subcommittee members (Rod Siring, Tom Hallin, Tom Hallin, and Duncan Patten) for helping to organize the event, and the TAC and research team members for presenting at the event.

(2) May 5, 2001 Research Demonstration Workshop Update

Liz provided a final agenda for, and reminded Task Force members of, the upcoming Research Demonstration Workshop on Saturday, May 5, 2001. She thanked Yellowstone National Park for offering to donate a bus for transportation between demonstration sites, and the Montana Watercourse for again helping to fund the event. John Bailey encouraged Task Force members to attend the workshop.

Presentations:

Liz reported that the following outreach presentations had been done:

(1) Cumulative Effects Presentation at NAQWA Conference, March 14, Red Lodge.

Liz presented a Cumulative Effects Investigation update at the NAQWA Annual Conference in Red Lodge on March 14, 2001.

(2) Yellowstone River Corridor Study Coordination Meeting, April 4-5, 2001, Billings.

The Corps invited the Task Force to give a presentation on the Upper Yellowstone River studies and “lessons learned” (specifically tied to the SAMP) on April 4, 2001 in Billings. John Bailey and Liz Galli-Noble gave the presentation.

(3) MWCC presentation Watershed Groups & Fires, Floods, Feds & Other Friends, April 11, Helena.

John Bailey, Liz Galli-Noble, and Alan Steinle talked about the Floods of 1996 and 1997 and how they brought together the community (Task Force) and the Corps. The presentation was to the Montana Watershed Coordinator Council and was held in Helena on April 11, 2001.

(4) Yellowstone River video project, 2001, contact: Joe DeFelice

Liz reported that Joe DeFelice from High Plains Films has recently contacted her. Joe is doing a video project on the Yellowstone River, and will be filming in the upper Yellowstone area this spring. The video is

educational and is being developed for Montana school kids. Joe would like to film some of the Task Force research teams and hopes to attend the June Task Force meeting.

VIII. TAC Update

A TAC meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2001 in Bozeman. The meeting discussion will include: (1) update from researchers, (2) cumulative impacts assessment (Corps), and (3) data synthesis and modeling. John Bailey requested that Duncan Patten discuss modeling at the next Task Force meeting; to introduce the subject to the Task Force and go over general terminology.

Joel Tohtz (Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Fisheries Biologist) reported that he has placed five temperature data loggers in the Yellowstone River. Temperatures are recorded every hour and are downloaded once a month. In addition, FWP assisted an MSU graduate student in radio-tagging 50 fish (Rainbow, Yellowstone Cutthroat, and Hybrid trout). He also reported that populations of Rainbow trout in the Livingston area have fully recovered from a decline documented after the large floods of 1996 and 1997.

IX. Schedule Future Task Force Meetings

Liz Galli-Noble requests that Task Force members call her at #222-3701, if they will be unable to attend scheduled meetings.

THERE WILL BE NO TASK FORCE MEETING IN MAY 2001.

As a reminder, the Task Force is up for re-appointment by the Governor at the end of June 2001. Task Force terms are for two years. The June meeting will focus taking care of any pressing issues in case Governor Martz is unable sign the new executive order immediately.

Next Task Force meeting is:

Tuesday, June 26, 2001 at the Yellowstone Inn.

X. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.